

NEWS RELEASE

Alabama Department of Public Safety

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TROOPERS WORK TO ENSURE SAFE HOLIDAY TRAVEL

Plan Impaired-driving Crackdown During Christmas and New Year's

MONTGOMERY— Throughout the holiday season, all available troopers will be on duty to enforce traffic laws, assist motorists and promote safe travel on Alabama's roadways. Public Safety Director Col. W.M. Coppage said enforcement plans include increased patrols, along with checkpoints and line patrols. He said troopers especially will target drivers impaired by alcohol or drugs during the holidays.

Along with the increased patrol effort, troopers will join with state and local law enforcement agencies nationwide to promote public awareness of the dangers of impaired driving as part of National Holiday Lifesaver Weekend Dec. 17-19. The preholiday safety campaign combines enforcement and safety education to encourage motorists to refrain from drinking and driving, to buckle up, and to obey all traffic laws.

"Public Safety's goal during the holidays and throughout the year is to prevent needless deaths and injuries caused by impaired driving, speeding and other dangerous driving behavior," said Coppage. "Troopers will make every effort to ensure that motorists safely reach holiday destinations to experience the joy of the season with family and friends."

The Alabama Department of Public Safety estimates that 14 people may lose their lives in traffic crashes in the state during the 78-hour Christmas travel period, which begins at 6 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 23, and ends at midnight Sunday, Dec. 26.

In 2003, 18 people died in traffic crashes on Alabama roadways during the 102-hour Christmas period, 16 on rural roads and two in urban areas. Alcohol was a factor in at least eight of the deaths, and 10 of the wreck victims were not using safety belts.

The traffic fatality prediction for New Year's is that 13 people may die in traffic crashes in Alabama during the 78-hour period from 6 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 30, through midnight Sunday, Jan. 2, 2005.

Last year, 26 people died during the 102-hour New Year's travel period, 18 on rural roads and eight in urban areas. At least nine of the deaths involved alcohol, and 16 of the crash victims were not using safety belts.

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